KESWICK URBAN DISTRICT ~~COUNCIL~~

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR THE YEAR 1918

BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
Library

Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the Year 1918 To the Keswick Urban District Council

Gentlemen,

The Report which I now have the honour to submit to you on the health of your district during the year 1918 is again - on account of War conditions and with the suggestion of the Local Government Board - considerably curtailed.

I shall, however, endeavour to discuss outstanding features in detail and to make evident the several point from a Public Health point of view, in which this year's records materially differ from those which have preceeded it. Firstly, as regards Vital Statistics - I have based my calculations on the data at my disposal; but a supplementary statement by the Registrar General is promised at a later date.

The number of births, no doubt owing to war conditions, was only 41 as compared with an average of 75 in pre-war days. This gives a birth rate, calculating the population at 4381 of only 9.35 per 1000. Of these births 37 were legitimate and 4 illegitimate: 25 were boys and 16 girls - thus confirming the populat belief in an excess of male births in war time. But though the number registered is small its tendency to increase is shown by the fact that as the year advanced that number rose from 7 in the first quarter and 5 in the second to 11 in the third and 18 in the fourth.

The deaths registered ~~independently~~ show no decrease, numbering as they do a nett total of 65, and this exceeding the births by 24.

Considering this mortality more in detail, one finds that there were 67 deaths in all. Of these 6 occurred in persons not belonging to the District and must consequently be deducted, while other 4 occurring in Keswick people temporarily residing elsewhere have to be added, thus producing a total of 65, which gives a death rate of 14.83 per 1000.

As regards the ages at death a sudden and regrettable increase in infant mortality is the outstanding feature. There were 7 deaths in children under one year, giving a mortality of 170 per 1000 births. Six were due to convulsions . Five out of the 7 dwelt in poor cottage property, and as no epidemic or infectious disease was found to contribute to this appalling loss of child life, it can only be put down to general causes, such as general ill health, malnutrition and pre-natal conditions.

At other ages the numbers were - Between 2 and 5 - 2, Between 15 and 25 - 5, Between 25 and 45 - 14, Between 45 and 65 - 13 and over 65 - 26, of which latter 7 occurred in people over 80 years of age, and the years distribution showed 15 during the first quarter, 18 during the second, 11 in the third, and 23 in the last.

As to causes Tuberculosis accounted for 8 (a very marked increase), 7 of which were cases of Phthisis - the 8th being unclassified.

Cancer caused 7 deaths, Influenza 9, Pneumonia 5, Bronchitis 5 Heart Disease 6, Apoplexy 2, Convulsions 6, Enteritis 1, Bright's Disease 2, Accidents 5, (an ~~improperly~~ unusually large number) Suicide 1 and other cause 10.

Infectious Diseases.

The year 1918 will be remembered as one during which for the first time for at least 20 years not a single case of Scarlet Fever was recorded.

Measles also was unknown and Diphtheria notified but twice

Chicken Pox appeared in Epidemic form during March, necessitating the closure of St. Johns and Brigham Infant Schools.

WhoopingCough was prevalent also in March, but to a greater extent in May, when the Crosthwaite Girls School had to be closed for three weeks on this account. Two diseases not previously recorded so far as I am aware in this district, namely Cerebro Spinal Fever & Para Ty phoid B. (one of each) have to be reported.

The case of Cerebro Spinal Fever was one admitted into the Cottage Hospital from the Cockermouth Rural District as ordinary Meningitis, which subsequently developed symptoms characteristic of

Cerebro Spinal or Spotted Fever. Due precautions were taken to prevent the spread of this dangerous, though only mildly infectious disease, and the patient was removed to Whinlater Hospital, where he made a good recovery. The expenses incurred in connection with the case were borne in part by the Cockermouth R.D.C. and the patient's friends. No susequent case arose.

The other uncommon disease - Para Typhoid, a modified form of Enteric Fever - was found in a child visitor, and here infection was traceable to impure water, which she had drunk shortly before coming to Keswick. This case was also removed to Whinlatter, the relatives paying all expenses, and was followed by complete recovery.

The only other cases treated in Hospital were two mild ones- one of Diphtheria, both of which rapidly got well.

Tuberculosis . While the truest index of the presence of Tuberculosis in this district is probably to be found in the number of deaths from this cause, it is satisfactory to notethat there only 5 fresh cases notified during the year - 4 primary or form A, and one by the School Medical Officer on Form B.

Of others previously notified 1 was re-notified by the School Medical Officer, 3 by the Medical Superintendent of the Blencathra Sanatorium on their admission and 2 also by him on their discharge.

Of these 5 new cases the first was admitted into the Blenfathra Sanatorium and is now again at his former work - the disease having been arrested. The second, a child, was treated at home, and is now practically well. The third was a visitor who has been lost sight of. The fourth, a child, is at home, condition unknown. The fifth is at the Sanatorium doing well. But of more serious import than all these other infectious diseases has been the serious outbreak of Influenza in our midst.

It seemed quite impossible for this district to escape, considering the very free communication existing between it and the surrounding infected areas through Medical Boards and other channels. Accordingly early in November the first cases made their appearance.

The disease spread rapidly and indiscriminately often striking down whole households at once, and the severity of the type was manifested in the number of deaths attributable to this cause. Of these there were 9 (4 males and 5 females).

1	occurred during the week ending		Nov. 8
3	,	,	Nov. 15
0	,	,	Nov. 22
3	,	,	Nov. 29
1	,	,	Dec. 6
1	,	,	Dec. 13

Four were certified as being directly due to Influenza; three to Pneumonia following; one to Bronchitis; and one to Heart Disease with Influenza as a contributory cause.

The ages at death were between 20 and 30 - 6; at 50 - 2; at 73 - 1, thus showing the high mortality in young adults, and the comparative immunity of children and old people.

The serious nature of the outbreak was early recognised, and all possible steps taken to limit the spread and provide help for the sufferers. The Elementary Schools were all closed promptly by the School Medical Officer, and remained so until the end of the year. The Keswick Secondary School was closed for a shorter period.

Children under 14 were excluded from the Cinema, and the special regulations of the Local Government Board with reference to Cinema and other places of public entertainment were enforced, all other social functions vigorously discouraged and those in charge of churches and other meeting places given special instructions as regards the ventilation of those buildings.

Further, leaflets and posters were published advising the public as to the best means of prevention and making it known that the gargle and nose wash advised by the Medical Officer to the Local Government Board could be obtained free of charge by all ratepayers.

In addition two extra nurses were engaged by the Council to work in cooperation with the existing parish nurses, and the Cottage Hospital threw open its doors to special cases.

No systematic Vaccine treatment was attempted and the number of those who were inoculated was too small to allow of any conclusions being drawn.

This concludes the account of the prevalence of Infectious Diseases, and with the exception of Influenza must be regarded as highly satisfactory. The help afforded through the Lister Institute's Bacteriological investigations has proved as valuable as ever.

The specimens examined were as follow: -

		Negative	Positive
Blood for Typhoid	1		1 Para Typhoid
Swabs for Diphtheria Bacillus	11	9	2
Sputum for Tubercle	6	4	2
Swabs for Nasopharynx Of Contacts of Cerebro Spinal Case. Plates x Incubated on the Spot	10	10	

I append with thanks to Mr. F. Swinburn of High Hill his report of observations taken at the Council's Meteorological Station which is interesting and instructive. It will be seen that the rainfall 24.34 in. was the highest record since 1903 with a corresponding diminution of sunshine, though this remains considerably more abundant than is generally supposed.

The town is to be congratulated upon possessing such a well equipped station and in having so skilled an observer as Mr. Swinburn in charge of it.

With the prospective formation of a Ministry of Health the year 1919 promises to be one of activity and progress.

As regards this district the housing question will require will require careful consideration, the end in view being to provide for all classes a healthy healthy conditions at work as well as in the home, and this has as its result of improving the general standard of health throughout the country, of lowering infant mortality and of stamping out tuberculosis and other forms of infectious disease.

Then we may look for an extension of child welfare and the

opening of the Tuberculosis Dispensary by the County Authority as well as more stringent regulations for securing a cleaner and better milk supply.

Another necessity (as I consider) from a health point of view is that the notification fee reduced to 1/- at the beginning of the War should now be restored to its original amount 2/6. Such reduction has, I believe, tended to discourage notification. As regard other desiderata one might mention the necessity for a Steam Disinfector - a Motor Ambulance and telephone, all in communication with Whitlatter Hospital, the usefulness of which would be greatly enhanced by such acquisitions.

With these and other projects in view we may look forward with confidence , not only to a continuance of past records, but a more thorough elimination of Infectious Disease, a very material reduction of the death rate , and a generally higher standard of health and living.

Your obedient servant,

J. R. Burnett

M.O.H ~~U.D.C~~.

KESWICK WEATHER RETURNS

			Rainfall				Greatest Rainfall	
1903	76.99 on 245 days	Jan.	6.70	upon	23 days		1.45	upon 20th
04	48.90 on 215 ,	Feb.	7116	,	23 ,		1.45	, 10th
05	45.34 on 210 days	Mar.	1.82	,	10 ,		.58	, 27th
06	51.66 on 220 ,	Apr.	1.14	,	8 ,		.31	, 6th
07	52.61 on 223 ,	May	1.74	,	14 ,		.43	, 25th
08	51.51 on 211 ,	June	1.73	,	13 ,		,39	, 14th
09	59. 5 on 208 ,	July	4.59	,	19 ,		1.13	, 20th
1910	59.34 on 212 ,	Aug.	3.03	,	19 ,		1.53	, 3th
11	60.91 on 185 ,	Sept.	13.72	,	25 ,		2.54	, 15th
12	57.97 on 223 ,	Oct.	9.29	,	22 ,		2.34	, 3rd
13	53.11 on 209 ,	Nov.	5.13	,	16 ,		1.14	, 4tE
14	60.03 on 202 ,	Dec.	6.77	,	29 ,		.77	, 19th
15	45.77 on 187 ,							
16	64.22 on 244 ,							
17	49.03 on 200 ,							
1918	64.84 on 225 ,							
		Total	64.84		225			

Average Annual Rainfall 56.35 inches on 215 days

(16 years)

Sunshine

	hrs min	days				
1903	1256. 50 on	255	Jan.	56. 30	upon	17 days
04	1375. 5 ,	290	Feb.	53. 0	.	15 ,
05	1348. 55 ,	286	Mar.	129. 0	,	25 ,
06	1253. 40 ,	274	Apr.	179. 45	,	23 ,
07	1102. 45 ,	238	May	196. 45	,	27 ,
08	1348. 20 ,	253	June	171. 35	,	25 ,
09	1402. 20 ,	257	July	181. 45	,	30 ,
1910	1353. 10 ,	260	Aug.	123. 15	,	27 ,
11	1601. 55 ,	255	Sept.	78. 15	,	26 ,
12	1016. 25 ,	244	Oct.	51. 35	,	16 ,
13	1246. 20 ,	238	Nov.	68. 45	,	18 ,
14	1436. 45 ,	253	Dec.	13. 10	,	18 ,
15	1368. 25 ,	273				
16	1250. 25 ,	255	Total	1289. 40	,	259 ,
17	1366. 25 ,	278				
1918	1289. 40 ,	259				

		S	hrs min		days
Average	Annual	Sunshine	1324. 16	upon	263

16 days